

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC028599
Inspection date	06/07/2011
Inspector	Joanne Vyas
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	15/03/2011
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately-owned children's home which provides residential care for up to four young people with learning difficulties who may also have a physical disability. Required adaptations and equipment are provided.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Young people make good progress at this home, especially with regards to their behaviour. Young people with complex healthcare needs are cared for to a high standard. The individual needs of young people are fully addressed, which may include cultural, religious and racial needs. Staff are highly qualified, committed and caring. They prioritise the safety of young people so they are safe and feel safe. Young people benefit from the positive and constructive relationships they have with staff. Families and other people close to the young people are made to feel welcome and put at ease about the care and support each young person receives. Young people are provided with good opportunities to make choices and make their feelings and wishes known. Young people, their families and their social workers are positive about the care and attention staff provide in this home. No requirements or recommendations have been made at this inspection.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress at this home. A social work team manager said of the home, 'Incredibly high standard of care provided' and of the progress young people make, 'Changes have been staggering.' Young people said they like living at this home and are happy. They like their bedrooms which are highly personalised. They get on well with their peers and have good relationships with staff.

Some young people in this home have very complex healthcare needs which staff manage effectively and with care. Young people who have a poor prognosis will be provided with sensitive care and are ensured access to the appropriate healthcare professionals. Young people will be enabled to die with dignity in a loving environment due to the care and attention staff give to them. Additionally, end of life plans, completed by those closest to the young people, provide a supportive and sensitive approach to dying and death. Staff have close links with a local hospice who provide significant professional support, healthcare and guidance for young people, their families and staff in the home.

Staff have good relationships with parents and carers. Young people are visited regularly by their families. Families and relevant professionals, such as young people's social workers, are invited to the home's functions such as the annual barbeque. Parents and carers are very positive about the care young people receive from the home, saying that staff are friendly and welcoming. They feel involved in the care of their child and say that their child has a good quality of life in the home. Social workers feel they are kept informed and updated about young people's progress. They also spoke about the positive relationships staff have with parents and how staff are able to reassure parents and help them to feel at ease about the care of their child.

Young people are in full time education. Staff ensure young people are ready in time for school with everything they need for the day. Upon their return, young people are made to feel comfortable and enabled to relax. Staff communicate well with the schools to ensure the health needs, activities and mood of the young people are effectively passed; this enables them to be well supported during the school day. Staff discuss each child's day at school with them on their return by accessing their home/school diary.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

Young people benefit from the positive and constructive relationships they have with staff. They are happy and relaxed in the home. Staff actively engage young people in appropriate activities using a range of toys/games/books appropriate to their age and understanding. Staff are interested to find out about their day in school. They provide the right balance between nurturing and enabling young people to be independent. For example, staff provide personal care sensitively while encouraging young people to carry out tasks that they are able to do themselves. Parents/carers are positive about the care young people are given; 'It is a home from home setting. It is a very small and family orientated placement with caring and supportive staff. It has a very happy and relaxed atmosphere. Activities are organised during school holidays for all children. It is a very safe environment.'

Staff actively seek the views, wishes and feelings of the young people, using a variety of communication aids such as objects of reference and pictures as well as understanding how the young people communicate. Staff have individual key worker sessions with each young person to ensure their views are ascertained. These may take the form of a shopping trip where a young person is encouraged to choose items to purchase and pay for them at the check out. Young people are also encouraged to give their views on a daily basis, for example, young people were asked to decide what food to have at a forthcoming barbeque, choose what clothes to wear or what drink they would like. The home also holds regular stakeholder meetings where parents and carers are invited to meet to provide their views about how the home is run. They help to organise things like functions, activities and discuss staff changes. Young people also benefit from having an advocate visit on a regular basis to gain their views and support young people to have a voice and be listened to.

Young people all have individual care plans completed by their key workers. The newly appointed manager has identified shortfalls in the plans and is currently implementing new systems to address these issues. Young people have complex healthcare needs and therefore it is crucial that information about them is kept up to date and accurate. This will ensure all staff have access to the correct information to enable them to provide young people with the appropriate care. However, staff are knowledgeable about the young people in their care and the manager has implemented a programme of meetings to ensure information is effectively communicated between staff.

Staff support young people in their education by helping and encouraging them with their homework, attending school meetings as well as supporting young people in the classroom to enable them to fully access their education and learning. Young people also spend time celebrating cultural and religious events and staff facilitate access to places of worship where young people express a wish to follow a religion.

Young people live in a comfortable home with high quality furnishings. They are provided with appropriate facilities such as specialised beds, baths and hoists to ensure they can be safely cared for. Young people's photographs and art work can be seen on the walls of communal areas.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people feel safe and are safe living in this home. Staff prioritise safety and are competent in their knowledge of how to keep young people safe. Staff know the procedures to follow should a young person go missing from the home. However, no young people have gone missing and high staffing levels ensure they are safe and well supervised when out in the community.

Young people are not restrained in this home or given sanctions. They are not bullied by each other but staff are competent in managing behaviour that challenges. A social work team manager spoke about the progress she has seen young people make particularly with regard to acceptable behaviour. She felt that the work staff have done with young people in helping them to accept close contact with people and control their behaviour will help them to transition into adult services.

Young people are safeguarded by good vetting procedures for staff. Staff safety checks such as Criminal Records Bureau disclosure certificates are sought prior to staff working with young people. All visitors sign in and out of the home and must show identification. Visitors are not left unsupervised with young people. Young people are protected by good health and safety procedures in the home including the risk of fire.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

There is a strong ethos running throughout this home ensuring young people are in a supportive and caring environment within which they are valued and safe but enabled to thrive and develop. The organisation supports the professional development of its staff providing a satisfactory induction which covers all the relevant mandatory training. Staff are then expected to go on to complete a relevant qualification at level 3 as well as other relevant courses such as in specialist healthcare tasks. Furthermore, the manager has completed a National Vocational Qualification level 4 in Leadership and Management and has almost completed the level 4 care qualification. Additionally, other senior members of staff also are completing a level 4 care qualification. Other staff have relevant degrees or a nursing qualification. Staff are highly qualified, competent and caring. There is a stable and diverse staff team in place with good levels of staff on each shift. Staff say they are well supported by the management team therefore ensuring positive outcomes for young people.

Good progress has been made towards meeting the previous requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. A new manager has now been appointed and is currently going through the Ofsted registration process. All requirements under Schedule 2 have now been met including providing a full employment history and satisfactory explanations for gaps in employment. The manager is currently in the process of completing an anti-bullying policy and risk assessments have been completed. Collections for clinical waste have been increased to prevent a build up. The home's Statement of Purpose is a comprehensive document which now clearly details the surveillance and security measures used by the home to ensure young people are safe and children's rights are upheld.

The manager has a development plan for the future of the home which identifies any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service or confirm the continuation of the home's current operation and resource. The plan has not been reviewed annually but the manager plans to review this in the forthcoming weeks in a planned meeting with the responsible individual. However, there are good quality assurance systems in place. The manager completes a monthly audit of the care provided as well as an independent social worker who visits the home unannounced to review the conduct of the home.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.